

AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph at page 2, line 7 from the bottom to page 3, line 8 as follows:

Soft caramels have a soft and chewable consistency that is due to a residual water content of 6% to 10% and to characteristic recipe components of soft caramels such as fat and, up to now, gelatin. Basically, soft caramels consist of a less soluble crystalline phase, a readily soluble noncrystalline phase, and a gaseous phase enclosed in the soft caramel mass, which leads to a smooth and light nature. The noncrystalline phase in the soft caramel mass serves to inhibit the crystallization of components and to stabilize the moisture, and the noncrystalline phase also has a crucial roll in the formation of body and the strength and viscosity of the soft caramel mass and affects the chewability of the soft caramel. Soft caramels also contain a liquid phase, whose viscosity is of decisive importance for the consistency of the soft caramel. In combination with soft caramel components like fat and gelatin the phases bring about the special consistency of soft caramels, in particular a chewable short texture and prompts~~[-sic]~~ the consumer to chew, but not swallow, the soft caramel. In the production of traditional soft caramels the use of gelatin plays an important role, since gelatin as a texturing agent affects the viscosity of the soft caramel mass and because of this prevents the recrystallization of the soft caramel components and also has a positive effect on the stabilization of the incorporated air.

Please amend the paragraph at page 7, lines 17 to 24 as follows:

~~"Carrageen" [-sic; carrageenan]~~ Carrageenan is a group of polysaccharides that are contained in a number of types of red algae species. With regard to chemical structure,

carrageen is formed similar to agar, but the fractions of the galactose sulfates are different. λ -carrageenan, κ -carrageenan and ι -carrageenan are commercially important. λ -carrageenan is a chain molecule that is formed of dimer constitutional units, namely β -1,3-D-galactose 4-sulfate and α -1,4-3,6-D-anhydrogalactose. These dimers are 1,3-glycosidically linked. The primary alcohol groups of the α -D-galactose is esterified with sulfuric acid and the hydroxy groups at C2 position of both galactose residues are likewise esterified up to about 70% with sulfuric acid.

Please amend the paragraph at page 8, line 4 from the bottom to page 9, line 3 as follows:

It is likewise provided in accordance with the invention that the gelatin-free ~~hard [sic]~~ soft caramel in accordance with the invention can contain, besides the said types of sugar and/or sugar substitutes, additionally one or more intensive sweeteners. Intensive sweeteners are compounds that are characterized by an intensive sweet flavor while having low or negligibly low food value. In accordance with the invention it is especially provided that the intensive sweetener is cyclamate, for example sodium cyclamate, saccharine, aspartame, glycyrrhizin, neohesperidine dihydrochalcone, thaumatin, monellin, acesulfame, alitame or sucralose.

Please amend the paragraph at page 10, line 4 from the bottom to page 11, line 11 as follows:

In a preferred embodiment the mixture formed by mixing the noncrystalline sweetener phase and the fat component, the polysaccharide hydrocolloid, the emulsifier and a part of the total amount of the isomaltulose is heated to a temperature of 110°C. In a

preferred embodiment the feed of steam is stopped after heating the mixture containing the noncrystalline sweetener phase and the mixture is subjected to a vacuum. After the end of the ~~[sic; treatment]~~ ~~steam temperature~~ treatment, the temperature of the mixture then rises to 125°C to 130°C. Then the batch cooker that is preferably used to cook the mixture is opened and the remaining isomaltulose is added to the heated mixture while stirring. The introduction of air into the resulting mixture can take place by beating the air into the heated mixture after adding the remaining isomaltulose. In an alternative embodiment the mixture obtained after adding the remaining isomaltulose is first cooled and then the air is introduced into the mixture by pulling the cooled mixture. Then a strand is drawn from the whipped cooled mass or the pulled cooled mass and from it the corresponding soft caramel pieces are cut into the desired size. Preferably the cut pieces have a weight of 2 to 7 g. The resulting soft caramels can then be packaged using the conventional methods for soft caramels, for example wrapping or enveloping.